

MARY STUART

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QUEEN
of
SCOTS

by
UNA
BIRCH



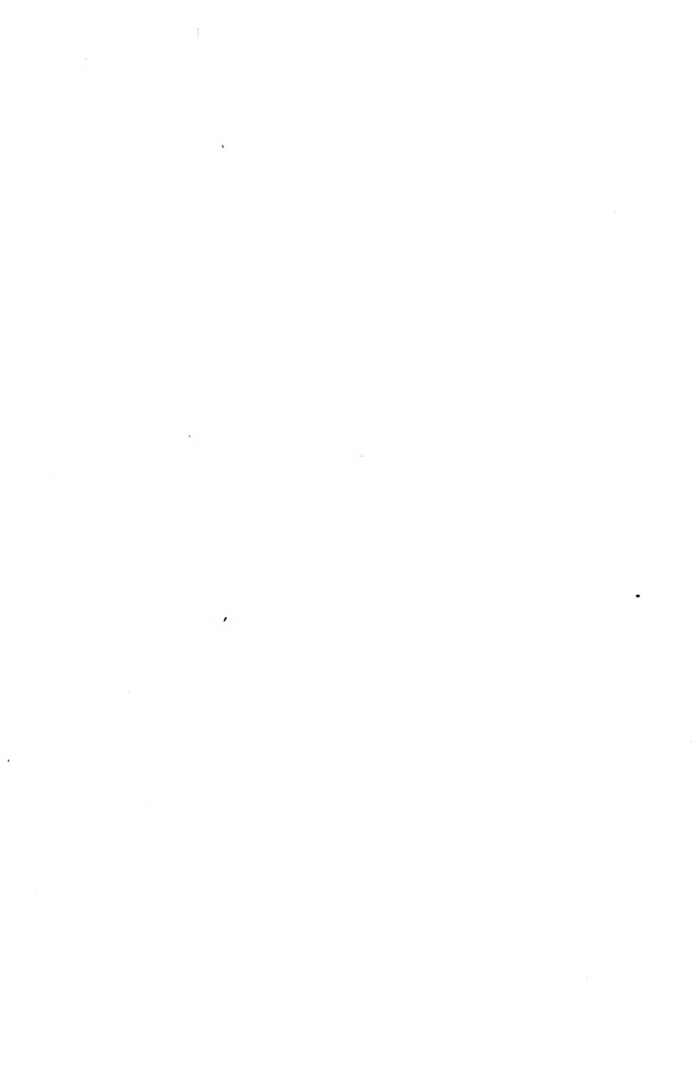


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MARY STUART

(MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS)





From the engraving by J. Sartain, after the original by Sir Wallan.

Mary, Queen of Scots, Signing Her Abdication

MARY STUART

(MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS)

AN ESSAY

By

UNA BIRCH

Author of "Secret Societies and the French Revolution"
and "Anna von Schurman: Artist, Scholar, Saint"



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John Lane.



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SIGNING HER ABDICATION *Frontispiece*
(From the engraving by J Sartain,
after the original by Sir Wallan.)

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS,
REPROVED BY KNOX. *Facing p. 30*
(From the engraving by T. Holloway,
after the original by R. Smirke.)



I

THE ENDURING APPEAL OF HER LIFE

IN the magnificent, impartial sanctuary of Westminster Abbey men of differing religions have been laid side by side: enemies have been reconciled: murderer and victim have been entombed. Among these pacts of death none strikes the imagination with greater force than that of two women. Their cenotaphs are placed in parallel positions of honor in recesses on either side of Henry VII's Chapel, equidistant from the holy shrine of Edward, King and Confessor. The catafalques are

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equal in magnificence, the alabaster effigies that lie below the marble canopies are both decked as queens; both pairs of feet rest on the same significant heraldic lion. The Abbey honors the unhappy, fugitive, ill-fated Queen, whose six years of power were expiated by eighteen years of duration and a violent death, no less than it honors the most splendid and successful Queen of modern history, whose assured reign was the golden age of the country over which she ruled. Neither woman ever looked on the other's face, yet neither was long out of the other's thoughts. One died, it is true, as disconsolately as the other, deserted by friends and lovers; and has not time equalized their fates? for round one head shines the martyr's aureole, while

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on the other rests the crown of material success.

Some one once said that the only biography which English people read willingly is the "Life of Mary, Queen of Scots," and that if variations on her career were brought out every month or two they would find countless readers and buyers. Absurd as this assertion sounds, there is a measure of truth in it, for interest in her life never dies, never even fades. From the day of Darnley's murder a continuous series of poems, plays and operas have been composed about this Queen. Vondel, Alfieri, Schiller, Swinburne and a host of less-known writers have been roused to celebrate her tragic story. Thirteen pages of the British Museum Catalog attest to the in-

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terest she has evoked in the minds of men and women of all nations. But in spite of all these efforts, no one has ever portrayed the magic of Mary, no one will ever know why her biographers develop into partizans, why hardly any one in writing about her has been able to resist weighting the balances in one direction or the other.

If we were to sit down and ask ourselves what virtues Mary possess we should not find the list long, but, as M. Philippson points out in his "Histoire du Règne de Marie Stuart," "Elle n'a point été la femme de mœurs légères que ses adversaires se plaisent à nous dépeindre depuis plus de trois siècles." She was courageous, generous, grateful to all who showed her kindness, and a lover of high

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and dangerous things. Her aptitudes were in a measure heroic, altho in practise she was cruel, faithless, untruthful, incapable of deep feeling or idealized love and subject to gusts of physical passion. What is it that makes us forgive her so much? Is it her youth? Is it her dreadful expiation of those seven years in Scotland, years crowded with incident, streaked with tragedy, stained by crime, darkened by intrigue?

The last historian to attempt an appreciation of this checkered life is Lady Blennerhassett, a woman well qualified by the habit of patient investigation and the methodical practises engendered by a life of serious work, as well as by her acute perceptions and judgment, to hold the balance fair. Emphatically this biog-

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rapher is not a partizan, tho she has a theory. It seems a reasonable one. She suggests that Mary's acts should not be judged by any of our personal standards of conduct, but should be referred to her idea of herself, to her belief that she was something more than a mere woman since she represented the majesty and sanctity of the kingly prerogative. It is probably true that Mary had no private standard of behavior and that she was fundamentally convinced that all personal inclinations and aversions should be sacrificed to political combinations, to the exigencies of government. That these combinations and exigencies occasionally necessitated the removal of certain persons from the scenes of daily life was to her no matter for idle regrets,

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for her view was detached, as that of any general who regards "casualties in action" as the means of accomplishing his end. With regard to herself also she stood completely aloof from sentimentalism, and Lady Blennerhassett, in writing of her matrimonial negotiations, says, "On la voit toujours prête à immoler sa personne à n'importe quelle combinaison politique."

Mary's life falls into four periods—the first consisting of five years' childhood in Scotland, the second of fourteen years in France, the third of seven years in Scotland, the fourth of eighteen years in England. The first of these periods is of scant importance, except from the point of view of foreign politics. From the moment of James V's death, six days

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after Mary's birth, the kings of Europe began to intrigue as to her eventual marital alliance. When dying, Henry VIII, far-seeing statesman as he was, imprest on Somerset, the Protector of the kingdom, that a marriage between his son Edward and Mary Stuart must be put through and, if necessary, by force. In execution of this project Somerset crossed the Tweed in 1547, and fought the Scots at Pinkie. Defeated in battle, the Northerners immediately identified the idea of national independence with a French alliance, and offered their baby Queen to France in exchange for help. Their offer was accepted, and the engagement of Mary to the Dauphin Francis confounded English policy.



II

THE FOURTEEN YEARS SPENT IN FRANCE

WITH a sad heart Mary of Lorraine dispatched her child to France. Five other Maries and several half-brothers, including Lord James Stuart, embarked with her, and in the first days of August, 1548, at the very time when John Knox, chained to the oar of a French galley, was laboring on the North Sea, the little convoy tacked along the west coast of Ireland to keep clear of English ships. At Roscoff, near Brest, a chapel stands to commemorate that calm summer voyage and happy

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landing. Thus were inaugurated the fourteen years of life in France, those years which both from the castles of Scotland and the prisons of England were looked back upon as Paradise.

The King of France called Mary the most accomplished child he had ever seen, and Diane de Poitiers treated her kindly, making sure that she was properly fed and properly clothed. Her education was well conducted, and at thirteen we find her declaiming a Latin oration before the court on the advantages of arts and letters to women, writing themes on Æsop, Cato and Cicero, as well as letters on hunting the fallow deer, and remedies for the toothache. Serious studies were considered good for children, but the main vocation of the

Fourteen Years in France

royal circle was the practise of what they called "joyusitie," the elaborate profession of a leisured class in that day as in all days—a brilliant, exquisite cloak disguising immorality, want of purpose and want of heart. "Joyusitie" was just the quality that Mary was in the future to try to impress on dour Scotland, and the quality she was to miss most among her northern subjects.

Mary Stuart's marriage to her royal *fiancé* was accomplished ten years after her landing, and as a mark of national approval the Scots Parliament, inspired by Mary of Lorraine, voted the crown matrimonial to the French prince. Lord James Stuart, when nominated by the Regent to convey the sword, scepter and crown of Scotland to the husband of his

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Queen, made many pretexts of delay and ended by never executing the commission. The death of Mary Tudor, which occurred in the same year as the wedding of Mary Stuart, was the signal for the King of France to give a foolish order, the unforeseen effects of which were destined to overcast the life of his gay little daughter-in-law. He ordered that the Royal arms of England should be quartered with those of France. Before signing the marriage contract with the Dauphin, Mary Stuart had secretly bequeathed (in the event of her dying without issue) Scotland and her claim on the English throne to France. Emboldened by possession of this secret treaty, Henry II, ignoring the claims of Elizabeth, ordered that Francis and Mary should be

Fourteen Years in France

proclaimed sovereigns of Scotland, England and Ireland. The effect of this proclamation was that the only hope of national independence in Scotland became at once centered in an alliance with England.

Four years before her marriage Mary Stuart appointed her mother, Mary of Lorraine, as Regent of Scotland. In trying to govern Scotland with Frenchmen the Regent had got into great difficulties. Her councilors were located at Paris and Fontainebleau, and Scots people resented their country being regarded as an outpost of France, a colony held by military occupation. Great dissatisfaction and suspicion of the Government were felt, and the Lords of the Congregation, headed by Lord James Stuart, called in

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English help to take the power out of the Regent's hands. Elizabeth, the English Queen, was in a dilemma, since she was unwilling on principle to support insurgents against an established Government, and yet fully aware of the intention of France to strike at England through Scotland. In February, 1560, she decided to ally herself with the leaders of the Protestant party in defense of national liberties, and in March she sent Lord Grey across the border with an army to attack Mary of Lorraine's troops entrenched at Leith. During the siege of this town the Regent, who had been ill for some time, died, and, owing to misfortunes by sea which affected the supplies and reinforcements of the French army in Scotland, the French were

Fourteen Years in France

forced to make peace with the Lords in two months. Desiring the union of their country with England, the Lords invited Elizabeth to marry Arran and so reign over Great Britain. This offer was declined, but the double "Pact of Edinburgh" was drawn up, a pact which on the one hand obliged Mary to withdraw French troops from Scotland and to authorize a Council of Government there, and on the other hand obliged her to abandon all claim to the English throne. This Pact, tho agreed to by the Scots and French negotiators, was never ratified by their Queen. Little, however, in the future was the Calvinist confederacy to trouble itself with the shadow of Royal power left in Scotland. It had determined that the affairs of the realm

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were to be administered by twelve gentlemen named by the Queen and five by the Estates, and in order to give a permanently Protestant character to Parliament it was arranged that several hundreds of proprietors and freeholders, especially selected from Protestant Fife, should be introduced into the assembly of spiritual and temporal lords. These proprietors were many of them in actual possession of ecclesiastical property and were awaiting the legalization of their authority. Many members of Parliament therefore depended for their very existence on the maintenance of Protestantism, and this explains much of the savage feeling manifested in this and succeeding years.

Mary continued to display the arms of

Fourteen Years in France

England, but the display was short-lived, for her boy husband died in the very year in which the Pact was made, leaving behind him the most forlorn little widow of eighteen, writing poetry and regretting the past.

Qui, en mon doux printemps
Et fleur de ma jeunesse
Toutes les peines sens
D'une extreme tristesse
Et en rien n'ay plaisir
Qu'en regret et desir?

.
Ce qui m'estoit plaisant
Ores m'est peine dure:
Le jour le plus luisant
M'est nuit et obscure
Et n'est rien si exquis
Qui de nisi soit requis.*

* *Translation*—"Who am I that, in the sweet spring time, in the flower of my youth, feel naught save the agony of extreme sadness and take no pleasure but in regret and longing?"

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During her "white mourning" Mary Stuart was approached on behalf of many suitors, and since she was no longer to be feared as Queen of France, overtures were received from Scots subjects. Leslie came on behalf of the Catholic minority, and Lord James Stuart was dispatched by the Calvinist confederacy "to grope her mind." Emphatically did the latter impress on Mary that it was impossible to reimpose Catholicism on Scotland, but that, since Elizabeth had refused the hand of their nominee Arran, the Calvinists were anxious to have his sister as their Queen.

Mary considered her situation. There was no place for her in France, and from Scotland it was as easy to conduct matrimonial negotiations as from any other

Fourteen Years in France

part of Europe. Moreover, her kingdom called her to the responsibilities of queenship. Deciding to go to Scotland, she placed herself unreservedly in the hands of her brother and begged a safe-conduct of Elizabeth for her voyage. This the English Queen refused to grant until the Pact of Edinburgh was ratified. With spirit Mary told Elizabeth's ambassador :

“Malgré l'opposition de mon frère je suis venue en France. Malgré l'opposition d'Elizabeth, je retournerai en Ecosse. Elle a fait alliance avec mes sujets révoltés; mais il est aussi des sujets rebelles en Angleterre qui volontiers entendront mon appel. Je suis vaine comme elle et je ne manque d'amis. Et mon âme est peut-être aussi grande que la sienne.”*

* *Translation*—“That which used once to be delightful is nothing now but bitter pain; the brightest day to me is night and darkness, which is the most sweet to me of all things but that I ask for it in vain.”

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A crowd of friends and relations escorted Mary to the sea-coast and there many unhappy farewells were said, but "joyusitie" prevailed, and she embarked without waiting for the safe-conduct of Elizabeth, which came on the very day she sailed. Three uncles went with her, d'Aumale, d'Elbœuf, and the Grand Prior, as well as chronicler Brantôme, poet Chastelard, and secretary Castelnau. As they left the shore a boat sank in front of their eyes. "My God, what an augury is this for a journey!" said Mary in horror.



III

HER RETURN TO SCOTLAND

THERE was something terrible about quitting a country then, something momentous which we in these days of safe and easy travel can never know. Mary, as she stood leaning over the poop of the vessel, watching the clouding coast, murmured, among her slow-falling tears, farewells to that dear country, France. She stood there sobbing for five hours, and when they persuaded her to leave the stern, said with a little laugh that she had done the opposite of Dido, who had gazed at the sea

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when Æneas left. It was summer time and she caused her bed to be made up on the bridge, with an order that she was to be wakened if the coast of France was still visible in the early dawn. They made but short way in the night, and she was able to look once more on the dim coast and exclaim, "Adieu, France, je pense ne vous revoir jamais plus."

The North Sea was overhung with dense fog and Brantôme thought they must be wrecked. "What does it matter," said the Queen, "if we do sink? Could we wish for anything else than death?" Being very miserable herself, she took thought for the most wretched people on board, the oarsmen, whom people were accustomed to regard as part of the machinery of the vessel. She

Return to Scotland

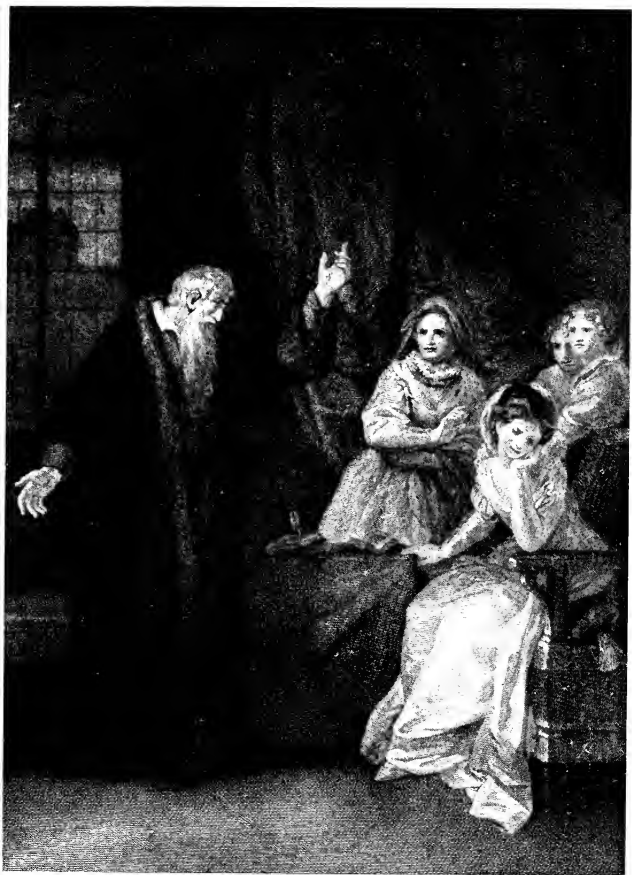
ordered that they should be treated kindly and not beaten.

The landing at Leith in the early morning of August 19, 1561, was a disillusion. Knox says: "The very face of heaven, the time of her arrival, did manifestly speak what comfort was brought into this country with her, to wit, sorrow, dolour, darkness, and all impiety." A few days later she was to hear from the lips of this man, her serious enemy, the strange and revolutionary doctrine that the obedience of subjects extends no further than the law of God allows. No one seemed to be glad she had come to Scotland, no one had taken thought for her; but tho she felt as tho transported from Paradise to hell, she knew the only remedy to use was patience.

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Her horses having been captured by the English, a miserable escort of badly caparisoned steeds was commissioned. She rode on a poor hack to Holyrood, where a crowd received her, singing psalms to violins and rebecks out of tune. Brantôme complained of the noise outside the palace windows that evening; but the discord made Mary smile and recover courage and “joyusitie” enough to request a repetition of the “melody” for the following day. And so she came into her kingdom—to a land where she was to find no loyal servant and no stedfast friend.

Mary had reserved to herself the right of practising her own religion and had guaranteed not to interfere with the religious settlement arrived at by the Lords



From the engraving by T. Holloway, after the original by R. Smirke.

Mary, Queen of Scots, Reproved by Knox

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of the Congregation prior to her arrival and confirmed by the Parliament of 1560. Calvinism was the officially recognized religion: all Catholic offices were forbidden. Soon after she arrived she ratified existing arrangements for the safeguarding of Calvinism and the persecution of Catholicism. Mary's conception of her duties as a queen never interfered with her execution of her private religious obligations. They were two separate fields of activity, having no connection with each other. While herself venerating the Blessed Sacrament and accepting fervently the Catholic articles of belief, she was able, without prejudice, to allow the impeachment in her presence of the Catholic Bishop of Dunkeld for making preparations to ad-

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minister Communion at Easter (1562), and to authorize the incarceration of forty-eight priests for saying Mass secretly. This equivocal lack of fervor earned for her the hatred of the Vatican, just as surely as her private profession of religion earned for her the hatred of her Calvinist subjects. It was only after solidifying her position by marriage with a Roman Catholic that she could venture to negotiate with the Catholic Church and allow her private religious inclinations to become public policy.

Her journey to Inverness to pacify the insurgent Catholics, and the execution of Huntley's son, were all part of an elaborate scheme to win the confidence of her Calvinist subjects, for Mary had no notion in these early days of imperil-

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ing her throne by any untimely demonstration in favor of Catholicism.

Holyrood was beautified and enriched by this northern journey of "pacification," for the sumptuous furnishings of Strathbogie were transported to Edinburgh, and made life there a little more tolerable for pleasure-loving Mary. Three half-brothers enlivened the old castle by their wedding feasts in January, 1562. Dancing, masquerades, tennis, cards (even on Sundays, to the horror of Knox), hunting with the falcon, riding and shooting with the arquebus, filled up the hours when the Council did not claim the Queen's presence. Life for the moment was as full of "joyusitie" as it ever could be in the drear atmosphere of Scotland.

The more we study Mary's person-

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ality, the more strongly we are convinced that she had no recognizable moral code; that questions of right and wrong, consistency, honor, and conviction were nothing to her; that political expediency governed her conduct; that responsibility sat lightly upon her, and that she only felt bound to act up to the old autocratic idea of queenship imparted to her during her education in France. She wanted power, and power was the one thing denied to her during those seven years in Scotland. She was never more than a figurehead, a puppet in the hands of that Calvinist confederacy. Power was no more permanently and essentially centered in her than it was in Darnley or in Bothwell; puppets all were they, to be supported or not by Scots politicians as policy might dictate.

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Henceforward the ever-changing background of councilors group and regroup themselves as if in some dark devil-dance about this girl of twenty and her two husbands. Among the principals—Moray, Maitland, Morton, Bothwell—one, and one only, was true to her. The seconds—Balfour, Huntly, Argyll, and the rest—are hardly worth troubling about. But moral disgust should not blind us to the issue at stake in their intrigues, which was the maintenance of Protestantism. To some of the politicians who worked so industriously against their Queen, Mary represented a disastrous policy, the policy of separation from England which jeopardized Calvinism and secured the continual enmity of a powerful neighbor by the continual

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assumption of heirship to the English throne.

Lord James Stuart (who since the expedition to Inverness had been created Earl of Moray) and Maitland of Lethington did their best to win Mary to these views in the beginning, and Elizabeth, with considerable civility, sent to congratulate her "sister" on mounting the throne of Scotland. A romantic paper friendship followed. Mary had not ratified the Pact of Edinburgh and Elizabeth refused to acknowledge in the Queen of Scots the next heir to the throne of England; nevertheless, the English Queen protested that she would liefer forget her own heart than that of Mary, "this heart I cherish." Mary kissed her "sister's" picture, kept her

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letters in her bodice, would wear no jewel but the diamond of her giving, and assured the English ambassador that in order to end their quarrel she would wish to be a man or else to be able to have the English sovereign for a husband. Many plans were made for the Queens to meet, but they all miscarried, and Elizabeth decided at midsummer, 1562, that no meeting should take place. All through the following winter the Queen of Scots worked at the business of government and read Latin prose with Buchanan, but when the new year came her thoughts were diverted to lighter things.

Chastelard, who had been back to France bearing a silver vessel to Ronsard from Mary inscribed "A Ronsard l'Apolo français," returned to Holyrood

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with verses from Ronsard to Mary. He also addrest to her poems of his own making:

O Déesse,
Ces buissons et ces arbres
Qui sont entour de moi,
Ces rochers et ces marbres
Sçavent bien mon émoi.
Bref rien de la nature
N'ignore ma blessure
Fors seulement
Toi qui prends nourriture
En mon cruel tourment;
Mais s'il t'est agréable
De me voir misérable
En tourment tel
Mon malheur déplorable
Soyt sur moi immortel.

Mary enjoyed this form of adulation and laid aside her Livy for models of French verse. The poor Huguenot poet lost his head as well as his heart, and,

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having been twice found concealed in Mary's bed-chamber, was condemned to die for his temerity. Just before his execution he read Ronsard's hymn to Death:

Le désir n'est rien qu'un martyre.
Content ne vit le désireux,
Et l'homme mort est bien heureux,
Heureux qui plus rien ne désire.

This execution was but the prelude to, the foreshadowing, as it were, of the terribly intimate tragedies yet to come, and it set people discussing more violently than ever the question of the Queen of Scots marriage. Was it to be the "crétin" Don Carlos or the representative of some other royal house? Elizabeth, it was well known, did not favor a Spanish or an Austrian alliance,

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because it would displace the balance of power in Europe. An English nobleman devoted to English interests such as Lord Robert Dudley would have been her choice. Mary, who thought a good deal about her own future, laughed and cried hysterically when possible marriages were discust, asserting that she would marry where she pleased, and again that a widow's lot was most enviable.



IV

HER MARRIAGE WITH LORD DARNLEY

AT Wemyss Castle, in February, 1565, Mary met her young kinsman, Darnley, new come from England, where he had been in almost daily attendance on Elizabeth. She promptly engaged herself to marry him. Randolph talks of her as a woman bewitched and so altered by passion that her wits were affected. Elizabeth declared the engagement "directly prejudicial to the sincere amity existing between the Queens and consequently perilous to the peace of both realms,"

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and dispatched Throckmorton to Scotland to break it off. The English envoy found a sympathizer in Moray, who viewed the projected alliance with no favor. For the three and a half years that his sister had been in Scotland, he had ruled her, and on the whole things had gone quietly and well. We know that from the time of the conclusion of the engagement things went anything but quietly and well. The General Assembly of the Church was frantic at the idea of a Catholic consort, and indeed no one viewed it with favor except Mary and the Lennoxes. Randolph wrote much of the bridegroom's arrogance: "Darnley's behavior is such that he is now condemned of all men, even by those who were his chief friends. What

Marriage with Lord Darnley

shall become of him I know not; but it is greatly to be feared that he can have no long life among this people." Looked at politically, the alliance was a good move, however, for it outwitted Elizabeth, as it meant the union of the only two possible heirs to the English throne, and union is strength.

The projected marriage caused the politicians to regroup themselves. Douglas, Morton and Ruthven declared themselves for Darnley; Moray, Chatel-hérault and Argyll (secretly assured of the backing of the English court) set themselves against him. Mary was faced with rebellion, and a fortnight before her wedding issued an admonition to her faithful lords and gentlemen to join her in arms with fifteen days' pro-

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visions. On the eighth day seven thousand men had obeyed her summons, and others were pouring in. On July 28, 1565, "en vêtements de deuil mais le cœur en joie," Mary was married. After the wedding she thought and dreamed only of battle. In August she was at the head of her troops wearing a light cuirass and with a short sword at her saddle. The people were with her, and vainly did Moray try to rouse an anti-Catholic rebellion by calling on the men of Edinburgh to rise and support him in defense of the Evangel. Some of his men deserted, and in the end Mary triumphed without bloodshed. Elizabeth never backed a failure, and Moray's venture was a failure, so when he arrived at her court to report progress she exprest en-

Marriage with Lord Darnley

tire ignorance of his erstwhile plans. The possibility of a Catholic combination against her was beginning to agitate Elizabeth's mind, and she deemed it well not to precipitate its formation by unfriendly action toward her sister Queen.

Philip II highly approved the Darnley marriage and was in process of forming a Catholic league in Europe, in which, as secret agents informed Elizabeth, Scotland was to be enrolled. This league was in some degree the political result of the deliberations of the Council of Trent. Catholicism, under that redoubtable Inquisitor Pius V, was in the ascendant, and so strong seemed the protection and support it might afford, that Mary and Darnley, both Catholics by birth, adopted a Catholic policy. They were urged by

the Vatican to do away with all leaders of heretics, and Pius V, in his eagerness, was reported to say that he would send his last chalice to help Mary in such an enterprise. In the web of spoken and written negotiations involved by the adoption of the new policy the acute brain of the Queen's private secretary proved invaluable. His name was Riccio, and he had been promoted from chamber varlet to the place of Raulet, the French corresponding secretary, dismissed for indiscretion. Maitland of Lethington, the official foreign secretary, was in practise superseded, his well-known English sympathies making him untrustworthy in subtler Catholic negotiations. Darnley, too, was useless in this matter; he was a careless boy, will-

Marriage with Lord Darnley

ing to undertake the state but not the responsibility of kingship. After a while Mary "removed and secluded" her husband from the Council. To prevent his knowing what letters were written, she had his name printed on an iron stamp, and "used the same in all things." Darnley was deeply offended at being considered inefficient in counsel by his wife, and proceeded to revenge himself for this slight with all the bitterness of a small mind. Maitland abetted the youth, and, writing to Cecil in February, 1566, used the cryptic words, "The ax must be laid to the root"; words which are supposed to denote approval of the Darnley conspiracy.



V

THE MURDER OF RICCIO

RICCIO was the son of a musician and sang bass in the Queen's chapel quartet. Tho evidence, common sense and nature are against the theory that he was Mary's lover, Darnley was not ashamed some months before the birth of his son to let it be said that Riccio was his wife's paramour. This poor-spirited boy, who had been proclaimed and styled king by his wife on the eve of their marriage, had never been granted in fact "the crown matrimonial." This crown connoted equal rights and

The Murder of Riccio

undisputed succession, and it was a source of great mortification to Darnley that it was still denied to him.

Meanwhile the exiled Moray and his men were anxiously looking out for a way of return to Scotland. Mary was in no conciliatory mood, and said she would only admit their return if they persuaded Elizabeth to acknowledge her as heir to the throne of England. Seeing that Darnley was vain, ambitious and weak, these refugees approached him with an offer to procure him the crown matrimonial if he would protect them in their return and swear to maintain Protestantism in Scotland. He accepted their conditions, and presently, either in collusion with these exiles or in execution of the spirit of their enterprise, he en-

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gaged himself together with Ruthven and Morton, to kill the controller of the Catholic policy—Riccio—as “an enemy of the state.” Bothwell, Huntly and Athol were not included in the conspiracy. Moray, who had previously tried to buy Riccio with a big diamond and a humble letter, did not appear till the day after the execution of the plot.

Every one who has read many of the “Lives” of Mary, Queen of Scots, realizes what undue importance is given in them to the facts of the Riccio and Darnley murders and to the mystery of the Casket Letters as against the actual bearing upon affairs of the conspiracies they symbolized. In considering accounts of the crimes and the incriminatory letters, we should not lose sight of

The Murder of Riccio

the political combinations of which they were but indications.

In discussing this particular tragedy we must bear in mind that Riccio might quite well have been killed anywhere and at any time. The two motives for murdering him in the presence of the Queen were equally vile: the first, that the death might be regarded and justified as a "crime passionel"; the second, that it might endanger the Queen's life.

The story of the evening has been told so often that it seems superfluous to tell it again. On Saturday, February 9th, as soon as dusk set in, Morton, with one hundred and sixty armed retainers, took possession of Holyrood. There was a supper party in the ante-room to the Queen's chamber, consisting of the

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Queen, her Italian secretary, her equerry, her half-sister, Lady Argyll and her half-brother, Lord Robert Stuart, an intimate little party of five. Supper was at seven. Darnley, who had been riding races that day upon the sands at Leith, had supped earlier, but came in while the Queen was still at table. He sat beside her and put his arm about her waist. Suddenly the white face of Ruthven appeared in the doorway, ghastly from mortal illness; he sternly ordered Riccio to leave the table. The crouching secretary tried to efface himself in the curtains of the window. Mary turned to her young husband at her side and asked him if this thing was of his doing. He answered "No." The Queen

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arose and went to the embrasure. Riccio, seeing Lindsay, Morton and others appear then, clung to her skirts and begged her to save his life. A few violent movements and the tables, chairs and lights were upset; all would have been darkness save for Lady Argyll's presence of mind in holding aloft one of the candles. The secretary meanwhile was dragged into the adjoining room and put to death. Most suggestively, the dagger of Darnley was left sticking in the corpse. The whole episode is only significant in so far as it bears on the religious and political situation in Scotland. The object of the conspiracy was, as we have seen, the maintenance of Protestantism, the means were the endangering of the

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Queen's life or reputation; and either way it meant the destruction of her authority in the country. Darnley was but the tool of the lords just as Bothwell in a far lesser degree, in so far as he was a stronger man, was their tool in the Kirk-o'-Field conspiracy.

Altho Riccio's death was a great shock to Mary, and the dagger of Darnley told its own story, the Queen kept her head, and from no word she uttered even in this extremity could it be gathered that she had any love for Riccio. Bent on requitals, she informed Darnley that if she died in giving birth to her child, friends would avenge her, naming Philip II, the Pope, the King of France and various Italian princes as possible champions. It is worth noting that at the


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same time that Riccio was being killed, the monk John Black, an ardent propagator of Catholicism in Scotland, was murdered in his bed by accomplices of Ruthven and Morton.



VI

THE MURDER OF DARNLEY

N the day after the murder Darnley dissolved Parliament in his own name. Before the Privy Council, a few weeks later, he declared himself innocent of all conspiracy, and, with the inconsequence which made it impossible for Mary to admit him to her counsels, betrayed his accomplices.

Mary was too friendless and too ill to quarrel with Darnley just then. Nearly every one seemed against her. Morton and Maitland were in the plot; Moray, her brother, was not ostensibly a plotter,

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but had he not arrived the day after the murder and requested that pardon should be extended to all concerned in the assassination? Mary's political instinct at this juncture came to her rescue, and with considerable acumen she took stock of the new situation. Bothwell, Huntly and Athol were certainly friends, but she saw that in order to maintain any position herself Darnley must be detached from the Protestant party; he must be made to feel jealousy of Moray's possessions and of his possible power in the country. Suppressing any natural disgust or contempt she may now have felt for her husband, she maintained a kindly, almost tender, attitude toward him, learned all there was to know about the Protestant conspiracy, and then per-

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suaded him to fly with her to Dunbar. This flight took place three months before the birth of her baby. As they left Holyrood secretly at night they are said to have passed through the crypt where Riccio's body lay, and Mary is credited with a Cassandra-like utterance—to have augured that unless things went badly for her, a fatter man than Riccio would lie beside him before the year was out. Mary was able to return in six days to Edinburgh on a wave of popular feeling. Her position in the country was for the time being safe, for she had succeeded in making Darnley jealous and distrustful of his fellow conspirators, and had decided once more to adopt a Protestant policy and support the Calvinist confederacy with her authority.

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As the time of her confinement approached she was certain she was about to die, and in the light of the end many things are forgiven. Darnley's treachery was for the time forgotten, and in her will she left him many sentimental tokens. The baby boy was born at Edinburgh Castle on the 19th of June, 1566. Mary recovered well and quickly, and with health came new life and an irresistible desire to avoid her husband. Where was she to find a true supporter or a faithful friend? Nothing more forlorn than her condition of mind can be imagined. The moment was ripe for a lover, a rescuer, a hero, and he appeared in the person of James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell. Her own *état d'âme* was the hot-bed for further tragedy. After recovery she went

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to Alloa Castle, a boat excursion arranged suddenly and secretly in order to avoid the escort of Darnley. Bothwell in his capacity of Lord High Admiral provided a ship for her transport, but it was Moray himself and not Bothwell who traveled with her.

Darnley went to Alloa for a few days, but soon left for Stirling in an ill-temper at finding himself easily dispensed with by his wife. At the end of September, Mary went to Edinburgh to work at finance and the Budget. The summer at Alloa and the early autumn at Edinburgh had brought new political schemes into the minds of all parties. To Darnley it brought the idea of intriguing against the Queen through the Catholic powers; to the Lords (who had

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discovered that Darnley was too untrustworthy even to be used as a tool) it brought the decision to support Mary and destroy Darnley. To Mary it brought the conviction that Bothwell was the only man strong and single-hearted enough to maintain her ascendancy. During the first week of October the new policy of the Lords crystallized; they declared they would obey no order of the King, but only of the Queen. Moray and Morton signed a document to this effect.

On the 9th of October Mary went to Jedburgh to hold an assize. While there news came to her that Bothwell lay dangerously wounded at his castle, the Hermitage. On the 15th of October, when the Session of Justice was over, an incident occurred which has

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given rise to much speculation and which very probably had some connection with the declaration of the Lords. Mary rode the twenty odd miles across country, accompanied by Moray, to see Bothwell. Her interview lasted two hours. Hosack is pleased to call this ride "a simple act of courtesy," whereas Buchanan saw in it an act of passionate desire. Probably the truth lies in neither diminution nor exaggeration. Vast quantities of papers, as we know, went to Bothwell the next day from the Queen's councilors and administrators, and it seems credible that in those days of untrustworthy messengers and betrayals something urgent may have made a personal interview important. A ride with a brother, an interview lasting two

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hours, would hardly be a means of satisfying a passion such as Buchanan divined. The ride, extremely exhausting as it was, was accomplished in thirty-six hours. Mary was ill after it, so ill that she thought herself about to die and commended her son and her Catholic subjects to Moray's care. On the 25th of October, when her life was despaired of, Bothwell arrived in a horse-litter at Jedburgh to receive her last instructions. But Mary did not die, and soon was back at work again, lodging for the sake of the country air at Craigmillar, a castle three miles to the south of Edinburgh. Her detestation of and irritability with Darnley grew. It had come to her knowledge that he was intriguing against her, and that he had sent letters to France,

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Spain, and the Vatican complaining of her tepidity and indifference toward Catholicism. To the French ambassador, Mary continually said, "I could wish to be dead," and that if she could not rid herself of Darnley she would commit suicide. Darnley had a particular dread of Morton (whom he had betrayed over the Riccio murder), and obstinately refused to have him back to Court, as had been allowed in the case of some of the other conspirators. The Lords made his refusal to pardon Morton the excuse for an open quarrel with him, and Darnley left the castle. In consequence of this a conference took place, known afterward as the "Pact of Craigmillar." It seems to have arisen informally from conversations held between Maitland, Moray, and Argyll.

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These three men were anxious to reinstate Morton and his companions in exile, and Maitland thought the best way to accomplish this would be by getting Darnley and Mary divorced. Argyll said he did not see how this could be done. Maitland said, "We shall find the means to make her rid of him." These three men then took Huntly and Bothwell into their confidence. Then all went to the Queen. Maitland, as spokesman, said that if she would consent to pardon Morton, means might be found to obtain a divorce between her and her husband. Mary entertained the idea so long as it did not affect the succession of her son. Then it was discust what rank Darnley was to hold, and the Queen asked whether it would not be better

for her to retire for a while to France: this suggestion was strenuously opposed by Maitland.

“Do not imagine, Madam, that we, the principal nobility of the realm, shall not find the means of ridding your Majesty of him without prejudice to your son; and albeit my Lord of Moray *here present* be little less scrupulous for a Protestant than your grace is for a Papist, be assured that he will look through his fingers and behold our doings saying nothing to the same.”

The Queen in reply said:

“I will that ye do nothing through which any spot may be laid on my honor or conscience; and therefore I pray you, rather let the matter be in the state that it is, abiding till God of His goodness put remedy thereto.”

She was against divorce, because as a Catholic she could only obtain an annulment on the ground of consanguinity, and this would affect the legitimacy of her

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son. The upshot of the deliberations was that the conspirators agreed to re-establish Morton, Ruthven and those who had fled after Riccio's death, and to arrest and impeach Darnley for high treason. In December, 1566, a bond was drawn up by the corrupt and treacherous Balfour. Balfour, Maitland, Huntly and Argyll signed, binding themselves to remove Darnley by some expedient or other, but Moray did not sign. Morton, Ruthven and Lindsay from Newcastle had sworn as price of pardon to become party to the bond of Craigmillar. Morton on his return refused, however, to take action until he had the Queen's approval of the conspiracy in writing. Meanwhile outwardly things were going on as usual, and preparations went for-

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ward for the baptism of James VI at Stirling. Darnley was not present at the festivities, altho he was in the town. The bondsmen once more sued their Queen for Morton's pardon, backed this time by the Earl of Bedford and his royal mistress. What could Mary do but yield, and how could Darnley be anything but terrified at the reinstatement of his worst enemy? He received a warning through Lennox, his father, of "a bond" concerning him and his future. On Christmas eve, Mary signed the amnesty for twenty-seven persons concerned in the assassination of Riccio. Stricken with fear Darnley rode away to his home near Glasgow *without* taking leave of the Queen. Falling very ill by the way, he suspected poison, tho really

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he had caught smallpox. From his father's house he wrote to explain his conduct, saying that Mary allowed him no authority, and that the lords isolated him.

From this time on the plot thickened; issues became more complicated. Two things had been arrived at by the bondmen: (1) the pardon of Morton and his companions; (2) the determination to get rid of Darnley. It now became evident that a third and unsuspected decision had been taken contingent on the execution of the second, and that was the marriage of the Queen to Bothwell.

Some historians lay but little stress on a document to which Mary appended her seal on the 23rd of December, the day before Darnley's flight. This document

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reestablished the Catholic Bishop of St. Andrews as primate and legate of Scotland and included the power of matrimonial jurisdiction. Is it not very strange that this jurisdiction was restored only to one Catholic bishop in whose diocese were situated Edinburgh and the demesnes of Bothwell? The Privy Council can hardly have been ignorant of this patent, which apparently proves that during the baptismal ceremonies at Stirling Mary was facing a double perspective; firstly, of separation from her husband, and, secondly, of the separation of Bothwell and his wife. The Bishop of St. Andrews was later on one of the signatories to the Ainslie bond, and he it was who annulled the marriage of Lady Bothwell. From this sinister Christmas plot

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it appeared as tho Bothwell had been selected (on account of his Protestantism and of Mary's undoubted passion for him) to be the future instrument of government for the Calvinist confederacy. The situation, however, is curious and is susceptible of several interpretations.

In January, 1567, Bothwell and Maitland went to meet the exile Morton under the Whittinghame yew, and from this time onward we are uncomfortably persuaded that Morton and Maitland were using Bothwell as a means to an end, namely, the success of the Protestant party guided by themselves.

M. Philippon thinks that the Queen went to Glasgow two days after the yew-tree conference in order to fetch Darnley away from the plottings of the Lennox

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family and to reconcile herself at least outwardly with him, fearing his open enmity too much to leave him at Glasgow. He does not credit her with any evil intention, but it is difficult to see any reason for conveying a man ill with smallpox from his own home to a dis-used monastery, and the balance of probability lies in the direction of the journey to Glasgow being in execution of some arrangement of which we are not cognizant. Mary was received outside that town with every demonstration of loyalty. In the interview she had with Darnley before supper that night she told him he must be conveyed in the horse-litter she had brought with her to Craigmillar.*

* According to the depositions of Crawford and Nelson he refused to go to Craigmillar and asked to go to Kirk-o'-Field.

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He made affectionate vows, spoke of new intentions and forgiveness for past follies, and the Queen, his wife, gave him her hand in token of reconciliation. On the second evening, too, they had a long talk, tho the air of the room was so "infecte" that Mary could not endure it more than two hours. She questioned him as to what rumors had reached him of plots hatched at Craigmillar; she asked him what Lords he hated; he answered that he hated none. Weak with illness and incapable of resisting his transportation to Craigmillar, he said, throwing himself on her mercy, that he knew "his own flesh could do him no hurt." This was the moment at which the two important Casket Letters are supposed to have been written—these are the conversations they

purport to report. It is Mary's part of kidnaper that they reveal.

The casket itself was a silver-gilt box, a present made to Mary by her first husband. In June, 1567, it was in the keeping of Balfour, friend of Bothwell and commandant of Edinburgh. After Carberry Hill it became public property. Morton and others who scrutinized the contents declared that it contained eight letters in French without date, signature, or address, some poems and two marriage contracts. Only one of the documents is of real importance—Letter II from Glasgow, for it directly implicates the Queen in the murder of Darnley. It is, however, so like Crawford's report of the proceedings at Glasgow as to be possibly based upon it. Mr. Andrew

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Lang* does not believe in integral falsification, but admits the possibility that Lethington and Balfour may have made valuable interpolations. Mr. Henderson† opines that Lethington had no time to accomplish so difficult a forgery and that Balfour had no key to the casket. He finds no evidence against, no suspicion of Lethington in contemporary documents. Lord Acton and the German critics believe in the integral authenticity of the letters, but whether we believe in their authenticity or not, Mary is condemned by her actions. It was owing to her persuasion that the sick lad was moved to Edinburgh, and whether she was the con-

* "The Mystery of Mary Stuart."

† "The Casket Letters," and "Mary, Queen of Scots."

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senting and conscious cooperator with the conspirators, as we are obliged after the divorce arrangements to consider probable, or not, she, a woman who had repeatedly expressed her delight in assassination and her gratitude to those who executed or attempted it, drew Darnley to his doom.*

Mary and her husband left Glasgow on the 27th of January and arrived at Edinburgh on the 1st of February. Darnley was conveyed to the western wing of a disused convent of Dominican friars, which stood near the roofless church of Our Lady-in-the-Field close to the walls of Edinburgh. Darnley's bedroom on the first floor was hung with tapestry; a

* "Lectures on Modern History," Vol. 1, Lord Acton, pages 151-2.

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great bed of brown velvet, ornamented with gold and silver lace, was there for him to lie on, and the floor was covered with a Turkey carpet. A turnpike stair led down to the Queen's room, where a bed of red and yellow damask, with a coverlet of marten's fur, had been installed. Considering how hastily the house had been put in order, it was very comfortable. The Queen slept in her red and yellow bed on Wednesday the 5th and on Friday the 7th February. On this Friday, Lord Robert Stuart, one of Mary's half-brothers, who had a pity and a liking for Darnley, warned him there was a plot against his life. Darnley told his wife, who immediately taxed Lord Robert as to his story, thus reassuring her husband.

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On the Saturday, Moray, who never obviously inculpated himself, went to his wife at Fife. On the Sunday, Mary supped at Sir James Balfour's house with Huntly, Bothwell, Cassilis and the Bishop of the Isles, and after supper went along the dark wynds accompanied by torch-bearers to visit Darnley. At about ten o'clock she reached her husband's room and sat beside his bed. Huntly, Argyll, Bothwell and Cassilis played dice, while the Queen talked to the sick youth lying in his taffeta mask on that dark velvet bed. About midnight the Queen rose and, placing a ring upon Darnley's finger, kissed him good-night: at the door she turned and said, "It is eleven months to-day since Riccio was slain." To Darnley, ill and lonely, the words sounded

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ominous, and he said to his servant Nelson: "She was very kind; but why did she speak of Davie's slaughter?" Opening his book of psalms he read aloud Psalm 55: "My heart is disquieted within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me." Mary meanwhile went back to Holyrood to dance at a mask.

Men and women said afterwards that Darnley's cries for mercy had come to them upon the still night air. His body was found in the field hard by, together with that of a page, Taylor. It seemed that they had tried to escape from the explosion, but that they had been strangled by a person or persons unknown.



VII

MARY AND BOTHWELL

WHEN the upholsterers came next morning to hang the widow's rooms with black, it was Bothwell who stood in the candle-light conversing with the Queen, who lay abed. Later in the same morning she presided over the Privy Council. During the official inquiry into the crime neither sentinels nor gatekeeper were called to give evidence as to who had come and gone to Kirk-o'-Field that night. Two days later an offer of reward was made; £2,000 and a free par-

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don were promised to any informer. No one dared inform. Day after day on the door of the Tolbooth bills were posted accusing Bothwell, Balfour, Chalmers, and Speers of the murder. It was discovered later that Murray of Tullibardine, one of Bothwell's warmest partizans, was the author of this placard and other bills. No one can doubt that Bothwell murdered Darnley. The nine or ten immediate accomplices may have drawn lots, and the lot may have fallen upon Bothwell. It may be that since he was to reap the reward of apparent kingship through their help, he agreed to do the disagreeable work of assassination; also, if any other lord had done the deed Bothwell later on could have brought him to justice. However the act had been ar-

rived at, it was settled that Bothwell was to take the throne as the guarantor of the Protestant ascendancy. M. Philipson viewing Darnley's assassination as a blow at Catholicism, says it was the complementary murder to that of Riccio. The program had been made easy of execution by the Queen's passion for Bothwell.

Two days after Darnley's body had been deposited in the vaults of Holyrood, Mary went to Seton, and there she quite threw off any such simulated grief as might have been agreeable to the Privy Council. She played games, went out riding and shooting, and made much of her future consort.

The Queen address a letter of condolence to the bereaved Lennox, and, in reply to his demand that the assassins

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should be brought immediately to justice, said that she had already summoned Parliament "to punish the terrible murder of her husband the King." The tribunal presided over by Argyll, an accomplice, was faced by Bothwell with perfect equanimity. He rode to his trial on dead Darnley's horse, escorted by 4,000 mounted men and 200 of the Queen's arquebusiers. Since Lennox feared to appear, no formal accusation was lodged against him and he was unanimously acquitted. Immediately Parliament by a series of acts restored his possessions to Huntly, and made grants of land to Moray, Morton, Maitland's father and other of Bothwell's associates. The General Assembly of the Church was not so docile. It was convened for the 18th of

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April and unanimously demanded that the assassins should be brought to justice.

The curtain now rang up on the last scene of the Craigmillar conspiracy to enthrone Bothwell. The day Parliament adjourned Bothwell bade his friends to supper. After supper a document was produced in which it was laid down that Bothwell had not participated in the murder of Darnley, and that he had been justified by the acquittal of the tribunal. The signatories to this document engaged themselves before God to defend Bothwell and to hasten his marriage with Mary should she choose him as husband. Huntly, Argyll, Morton, Cassilis, Seton, fourteen lay lords in all, and eight bishops signed this paper known to history

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as the Ainslie Bond or the Bond of the Nobility. Murray had prudently slipped off to France.

Things were moving quickly, for on the 24th of April, 1567, Mary, who was riding with Maitland, Huntly, and an armed escort from Linlithgow to Edinburgh, where she had been visiting the baby son she was never to see again, was intercepted by Bothwell and his men and taken to Dunbar, of which she had just given him command.

Public decorum forbade that a Queen should ostensibly accept an offer of marriage from a man who had made her a widow ten weeks before, wherefore this ambush was devised. On the 27th of April the divorce processes already arranged for were begun; on the 29th the

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Privy Council, presided over by the Queen, sat at Dunbar. The Commissary Court of the Kirk granted the Protestant divorce to Bothwell on the 3rd of May, while on the 7th of May the Bishop of St. Andrews exercised his privilege of matrimonial jurisdiction for the first and last time by granting that Catholic annulment to Lady Bothwell for which she had been induced to apply by her brother, Huntly, and his fellow bondmen.

Bothwell was "publicly forgiven" by Mary and created Duke of Orkney. The marriage took place on the 15th of May, Huntly alone of the bondmen being in attendance. It lasted barely a month, and during that month Mary was consumed with jealousy, for she found that Bothwell despised all women save one,

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and that one was the wife he had just divorced.

The calculations of every one concerned in this *coup d'état* were entirely falsified by a factor with which they had not reckoned. Successful crime requires the seal of public approval, and no one seems to have anticipated the intensity of the popular disapproval aroused by Mary's wedding with her husband's assassin. The horror expressed by foreign ambassadors and by the people of Scotland caused Bothwell's bondmen to reconsider their position. As a result of this reconsideration they decided on an open change of front; to withdraw their nominal support from Bothwell and to adopt some alternative policy which would involve his overthrow; this they

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leagued themselves by bond to do. Mary, who felt the ground slipping away from under her, made a last bid for popularity by revoking permission for the practise of the Catholic religion and by herself abstaining from all acts of worship. To test for herself what authority was still hers, she summoned "her liege lords" to Melrose on the 15th of June, at the same time issuing orders for a levy of troops to be made on the pretext of an expedition against "the robbers of the Marches." No liege lord came to Melrose, and Bothwell and the Queen were assured of that which they already half realized, that no dependence could be placed on the signatories to the Ainslie Bond.

To the Calvinist Confederacy, who

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now, as six years earlier, desired the alliance of England, it mattered not that the Queen was in danger, nor that they had been false to their erstwhile associate. To them the situation represented a great opportunity, and accordingly they took advantage of it.

Mary and Bothwell had gone to Borthwick on the 7th of June, and thither Morton, in ready response to popular feeling, came with a thousand men and more to demand the murderer's blood. Mary spoke with this envoy while her husband escaped. Morton's message was that he and his friends would serve their Queen if she would abandon the King's murderer. In answer she said that he and his friends had pronounced the Duke guiltless, and that she, their Queen, had

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received him as husband. When Morton had left to convey her reply to his friends, the Queen set out to rejoin Bothwell, and together they took refuge in the impregnable fortress of Dunbar.

Misled by a message from his one-time friend Balfour, Governor of Edinburgh, to the effect that he would cooperate with the royal troops if they marched toward the capital, Bothwell and the Queen set out for Seton, meeting the hostile lords at Carberry hill on the old battle-field of Pinkie. There was no fighting because Mary, afraid for Bothwell's safety, promised to parley with the Lords if only he might be allowed to ride away. They said farewell with "long kisses," never to meet again, and the Queen went with the

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Lords to Edinburgh. As she rode, dusty and disheveled, through the streets of the capital that night, she was preceded by a banner on which dead Darnley was depicted, and by his corpse was a kneeling child, out of whose mouth the words, "Judge my cause, and avenge me, O, Lord!" issued. She had refused food through all the long June day, and that night cried for rescue to passers-by. Her dearest wish was to be placed upon a ship with Bothwell and allowed to drift at the wind's will.

The lords were in a dilemma, since the Queen refused to abandon Bothwell. They could in no case reinstate her, for she knew too much. Had not Bothwell told her all his secrets, and had he not given her a paper stating that Morton,

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Maitland and Balfour had murdered Darnley? They decided at length that she should be incarcerated in Loch Leven Castle, under the custodianship of Moray's mother. On the 17th of June she was imprisoned; on the 25th a General Assembly denounced her as murderess; on the 16th of July she was forced to abdicate, and to appoint Moray as regent; on the 29th her boy was crowned. Nearly a year was spent by Mary most wretchedly in the solitude of Loch Leven Castle. In May, 1568, she managed to escape.

Bothwell was abroad, and Mary decided to try to reassume her former position of Queen, in which decision Argyll, Huntly and other lords, as well as nine bishops and many gentlemen, supported

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her. After revoking her abdication she sent to negotiate with the Regent, who waited till he had got men together, and then declared himself determined to support the cause of the Infant King. Mary was extremely anxious to avoid fighting, as her position was improving every day. She intended to go to Dumbarton and summon Parliament to meet her there. The Hamiltons, who formed her escort, appeared to fall in with her pacific views and to be willing to convey her circuitously to Dumbarton so as to avoid any chance collision with the Regent Moray's troops. They played her false, however, by making straight for Dumbarton by Glasgow, which they knew to be occupied by the Regent, assuring the Queen that they would do

their best to avoid any encounter. The Regent's troops were in a position on Camp Hill, close to the village of Langside, and the Hamiltons, in trying to take this hill by assault, were completely routed with the loss of three hundred men. Mary watched the battle, the doom of all her hopes, from the hill of Cathcart. Seeing the day lost, she was seized with fear, remembering the night after Carberry Hill, and galloped away, abandoning forever her cause. Obedient to the impulse of terror she got out of Scotland as quickly as she could, crossing the Solway Firth to Workington in Cumberland.



VIII

THE EIGHTEEN YEARS SPENT IN ENGLAND

FROM the moment that her feet touched English soil Mary loses all historical significance. She no longer influences events, she becomes the more or less passive object round which plots and intrigues crystallize.

On the 15th of May she wrote to Elizabeth—the first of many letters—explaining her plight: “I hope you will send immediately to see me. All my clothes and necessaries were left behind.” High sheriff Lowther conducted her to Carlisle Castle, and the great

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English lords flocked to see her. Her dignity suffered for want of suitable clothing, and a request made to Elizabeth for help of this kind was answered by a present of cast-off raiment and a few yards of velvet. Lowther received orders on the 20th of May to pay all honor to the Queen, but to allow no one to escape. Mary's wish was to see Elizabeth and persuade her personally of the justice of her cause; but Elizabeth found her "sister" a great problem, and was for the moment unwilling to compromise herself by precipitate action.

It was impossible, of course, to detain Mary in England without some plausible ground for doing so, and quite as dangerous in its own way as allowing her to remain at large. Elizabeth,

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however, took a middle course and refused to see her "sister" until she could clear herself of suspicion. Mary wrote impetuously to the English Queen "that she would sooner apply to the Grand Turk than renounce vengeance against her rebel subjects." Step by step Mary was inveigled into submitting to an indirect adjudication of her cause. Elizabeth pacified her by promising to reconcile Mary and her people once her innocence was established, and at the same time ordered Moray to justify his criminal rebellion. Instead of doing so, he asked whether Elizabeth would accept the validity of the Casket Letters if the original French ones were submitted to her and found to tally with the Scotch translations. He received no direct

answer, but covert encouragement, and presently a conference was summoned at York for October to judge Mary. Before Moray decided to bring accusations forward at this Commission of Inquiry, he tried to insure his future by getting answers to three questions: (1) Was a *judgment* at York authorized? (2) In the event of condemnation, would Mary be delivered up to them or kept in England? (3) Would he be confirmed as Regent?

Elizabeth gave a secret affirmative reply to Moray's questions and disallowed all Mary's requests to be allowed to face her accusers in open court. The Commission was transferred from York to London and at once became an inquiry into the murder of Darnley and into the

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reported intention of Mary to kill her son.

In December Moray produced his accusation—the “Book of Articles,” a series of calumnious insinuations repeated later in Buchanan’s “Detectio.” He inquired whether the English Commissioners were satisfied, and when his inquiry was received in assenting silence he and his partizans withdrew. After a short interval Moray, who even to Lethington seemed to be behaving ignominiously, returned alone with the Casket. The letters within it were examined. They did their work and enabled Elizabeth to treat Mary as a criminal.

Mary was sent to Tutbury, and became interested in the project of a new mar-

riage. Elizabeth, fearing danger, caused the possible partner to be imprisoned in the Tower, thereby dealing Mary and her champions a severe blow. This incarceration of the Duke of Norfolk removed the keystone from the Catholic arch, and made the efforts of Mary's rescuers rather pointless. In 1570 Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth, declaring she had no right to the throne, and forbidding her subjects to obey her on pain of excommunication. By March, 1571, Mary was in correspondence with the King of Spain, the Duke of Alva and the Pope, to whom she had applied for an annulment, by reason of constraint, of her marriage with Bothwell. Ridolfi, her secret agent, talked a good deal, and Burleigh knew every detail of the con-

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spiracy—knew that if Spain would land an army it was guaranteed that Norfolk would put 23,000 men into the field to cooperate with it; knew of the sixty lords who would back such a scheme; knew that Mary was receiving money from the papal nuncio. Lord Shrewsbury was told to inform her that all her plots were known, and that as a consequence her detention was to be aggravated and her correspondence curtailed. She implored grace for Norfolk, but he was executed, cursing Mary and declaring himself a member of the Church of England.

By this time Buchanan had published the "Detectio," and all the world became familiar with his infamous rendering of his pupil's life. Mary read it in her

Mary Stuart

prison and no doubt made many bitter reflections on the falseness of men.

In June, 1572, odious plans were engaging the minds of Burleigh and Elizabeth, who could not make up their minds to put Mary to death. As the result of their deliberations, Burleigh's son-in-law was sent on a mission to Morton, Mar and Knox, to inquire whether, in the event of Elizabeth surrendering her custodianship of Mary to them, the Lords would engage to kill her four hours after arrival, "to receive that which she had deserved there by order of justice." Knox did not object to this proposal, Morton wanted another trial and a guarantee of military assistance. Mar wanted money and a defensive alliance with England. The negotiations, how-

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ever, came to nothing in the end, as Elizabeth, tho desirous of assassination, feared revelation.

In 1572, Mary's life practically ended. She was thirty years old, and for the rest of her days remained a closely guarded prisoner. From this time on her attitude changed, and she regarded herself as a martyr to her religion, as the representative of an abused and persecuted faith.

Catholic friends still rallied to her support. In June, 1579, Gregory XIII sent five ships and 2,000 papal soldiers to Ireland, which was to be the new "point d'appui" for an attack on England. In the following year a Jesuit campaign was opened in England, and in 1582 Elizabeth managed to persuade the

Mary Stuart

Scots Lords that Mary and Lennox had organized a Catholic conspiracy, into which their King had entered, promising to become a Catholic. On the strength of this suspicion, James VI was temporarily imprisoned; but the accusation was quickly disproved and James VI allied himself with Elizabeth in 1585. In the treaty at this time made there was no mention of his mother, Mary. For all he cared she might have been dead. Mary continued her small and pathetic civilities to her jailer, sending Elizabeth presents of conserved fruits from France and of needlework, but she received nothing in return. Laughingly, she remarked one day, "Que les gens qui vieillissent prennent des deux mains mais ne rendent que d'un doigt."

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The next few years were interwoven with intrigues. In the unsympathetic English country Mary, the center of the web of complication, sat writing poetry. Burleigh, tired and angered by the situation, determined to hoist her with her own petard. He sent her to Chartley, and encouraged her to go on with her scheming—the more letters and plots and intrigues the better, for only so could she be finally enmeshed. Walsingham was his willing agent in this matter, and Mary but clay in their hands. All letters issued from Chartley—and some of them were concealed in beer barrels—were seized and the so-called Babington conspiracy was brought to light. Babington and eleven others had bound themselves by oath to foment insurrec-

Mary Stuart

tion in England and to kill Elizabeth. On the 17th of July a letter from Mary to Babington was found, and it became the ground of her condemnation. On the 8th of August, while riding toward Tixall, Mary was arrested; on the 17th of September Babington and others were executed; on the 25th Mary was conveyed to Fotheringhay. Elizabeth wrote to Paulet, custodian of Fotheringhay, "That she lifted up her hands to Him who alone can save or destroy, beseeching Him to deliver from the claws of the demon the better part of this woman who has fallen to assassination." Of Mary she twice demanded avowal of crime and recourse to her clemency, and twice she was repulsed.



IX

FOTHERINGHAY

AFORTNIGHT after Mary's arrival at Fotheringhay 42 commissioners and 2,000 men, followed after an interval by eight judges, appeared before the castle. At first Mary would not consent to submit her cause to such an assembly, firstly, because a Queen can not be judged by subjects, and, secondly, because she could not recognize the laws of England, which had afforded her no protection. In a day or two she was persuaded to appear before the judges. Counsel was refused; no witnesses were

Mary Stuart

called; the commissioners constituted both judge and jury. She was informed that papers and documents would be of no use, as she was to be accused of nothing before the 19th of June of that very year. In short, she was to be tried for complicity in the Babington plot. The accusation was read and supported by the Chartley letters. At first Mary said she knew nothing of Babington; the letters produced were avowedly copies; how could she tell if they were genuine or accurate? Where were her own secretaries? Why had they killed the principal witness, Babington? She admitted intercourse with Babington after a while, but *not* conspiracy against Elizabeth's life. The judges listened to passionate accusations and complaints, but

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there was no sign of weakness, no debasing of queenhood, visible to any witness. Crippled yet queenly, she faced her accusers, adjuring the Commissioners who denied her counsel to look to their consciences and to remember that the theater of the world is wider than the realm of England. She answered Burleigh in his role of Crown Prosecutor with spirit and clearness. She had no notes, no secretary and no documents, and said that no man there could defend himself in such circumstances. During the days of trial she was serene in temper, reading the Lives of Saints and discussing English History. Her conscience was at rest: she saw herself a martyr.

Presently the Commissioners disappeared with their evidence, and judgment

was pronounced in the starred chamber of Westminster, Lord Zouche alone among those there declaring himself not satisfied that she had "compassed or imagined the death of the Queen of England." Mary was condemned to death. Parliament confirmed the sentence. After a short interval, both Houses petitioned that the sentence should be executed. Elizabeth begged them to reconsider the matter and to devise some better remedy. After fresh deliberation they repeated their request, and forthwith Lord Buckhurst was dispatched to Fotheringhay to acquaint the Queen of Scots of the judgment. Elizabeth shrank from signing the death warrant, altho she had caused the sentence to be proclaimed to the sound of a trumpet

Fotheringhay

throughout the kingdom. The sword hung suspended over Mary's head for several weeks, but at last, on the 1st of February, at Greenwich, the Queen of England signed the warrant of execution, as it were inadvertently, among other state papers. She thought herself very badly served in that no one had privily killed Mary.

Desolation gives courage, and Mary, "destitute of all aid and advice but that of God, felt cheerfulness and strength." When Lord Buckhurst had broken to her that she was condemned to die for consent to and authorship of rebellion, she said:

"I expected nothing else. . . . I do not fear death and shall suffer it with a good heart. I have never been the *author* of any conspiracy to injure the Queen. . . . For my part, I

am weary of being in this world; nor do I, or any one else, profit by my being here."

Eleven weeks later, when the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury came to tell her that she was to die the following morning, she received the message quietly and said, "It is the road to heaven."

Mary's worst enemy must admit that she died admirably. In a farewell letter to Mendoza she said with the same irony and detachment with which she was able to take farewell of her suite: "They are working in my hall; I think they are making a scaffold to make me play the last scene of the tragedy."

Mary wrote letters on the evening before her death, signing her name for the last time to a letter to the King of France at 2 A.M., six hours before the time ap-

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pointed for the ceremony of execution. Then she lay still upon her bed. Her attendants observed that her lips moved and that she smiled peacefully. Jane Kennedy called it "laughing with the angels."

Mary's dignity in the supreme moment was magnificent; exalted beyond fear or hope in the assurance that she, herself but a poor sinner, was admitted to that deathless roll of men and women who have been privileged to shed their blood for the Catholic faith.

She commended her spirit to God kneeling, and a moment later a piece of rough woolen stuff, snatched from the billiard-table, covering the quivering remains of this unhappy Queen.

The personal note silences all conten-

Mary Stuart

tion, and tho as students of history we ought to be considering the public consequences of her execution in the quieting of conspiracy and rebellion, yet as human beings we only find ourselves wondering whether death ever justifies life.

The green mounds of Fotheringhay look as remote from tragic happenings as the sheep that browse upon their slopes. All the Stuarts were ill-starred from the cradle, and we may say with Voltaire that if anything could justify fatalism it would be the tragic history of their house.

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